

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

NICE guidelines

Indoor air pollution

The impact on equality has been assessed during guidance development according to the principles of the NICE equality policy.

1.0 Scope: before consultation

1.1 Have any potential equality issues been identified during the development of the draft scope, before consultation, and, if so, what are they?

(Please specify if the issue has been highlighted by a stakeholder)

The scope considers the 'whole population' and does not restrict by any of the protected characteristics - air pollution has an impact across the lifetime from conception through to death. Air pollution affects all population groups although some may be more vulnerable than others.

Socioeconomic status

Evidence suggests there may be a link between socioeconomic status and air pollution. There may be more pollutants in housing occupied by those from lower socioeconomic groups for example, an increased risk of damp, housing located in areas at increased exposure of externally generated pollutants from traffic or industrial process that make their way into the home.

Those from the most deprived backgrounds generally experience a poorer environmental quality – the 2006 report by Defra, NETCEN national statistics and Department for Communities and Local Government flagged the inequalities in the distribution of pollutant concentrations (NO₂, PM₁₀ and SO₂).

Age, sex, disabilities and other (people with pre-existing conditions)

Ventilation is a key factor when considering indoor air quality, but there needs to be

a balance between draught proofing homes to keep in warmth and the need for ventilation to prevent the build-up of radon, environmental tobacco smoke and other potentially harmful pollutants in the home. This may have implications for those at risk of preventable excess winter deaths and experiencing 'fuel poverty and fuel debt'. NG6 describe those at risk from preventable excess winter deaths as including **people with cardiovascular conditions, respiratory conditions, mental health conditions, disabilities and older people**. It also includes **those with young children, pregnant women and those on a low income**

The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP) has flagged that **children and older people** are susceptible to certain conditions, for example asthma, which are exacerbated by poor air quality. There are a higher proportion of children in the most deprived areas in England which as outlined has a greater concentration of observed NO₂ and PM10.

1.2 What is the preliminary view on the extent to which these potential equality issues need addressing by the Committee? For example, if population groups, treatments or settings are excluded from the scope, are these exclusions justified – that is, are the reasons legitimate and the exclusion proportionate?

As the scope is inclusive of the whole population, there are no potential equality issues that need addressing by the Committee at present. The identification of particular groups that are at increased risk of the health impact of indoor pollution (as identified in the EIA and any review questions on this topic) is something that the Committee should consider in the process of guideline development.

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